

THIS MONTH AT THE



# Mechanics' Institute

[www.milibrary.org](http://www.milibrary.org)

VOL. 3, NO. 12 DECEMBER 2013

## AUTHORS' CARNIVAL HIGHLIGHT



**Monday, December 2, 4:00 pm**

**Picturing the News: A Look at the *San Francisco Examiner* Photographic Negative Collection**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Pictorial Processing Archivist Lori Hines will present a slideshow and talk on trends in journalism, culture, and history she observed while sorting, re-housing, and describing the collection of 3.6 million negatives from ca. 1930-2000.

Full listing on page 5

## MEMBERS' MEETING



**Thursday, December 5**

**5:30 pm Reception and Refreshments;**

**6:00 pm Meeting**

4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Join us for delicious refreshments and camaraderie as we welcome our new Library Director Deb Hunt and hear from the staff on what's new and coming up at the Mechanics' Institute. In the meeting, we will also conduct a special vote to amend the Articles of Incorporation.

**Members and Guests Free.**

Full listing on page 7

## IN REVIEW

### Jack London: An American Life by Earle Labor

TARYN EDWARDS, MEMBERSHIP  
RELATIONS / MARKETING  
SPECIALIST

**M**y great grandfather's early life mirrored that of Jack London. Born in San Francisco to a seamstress whose husband abandoned her, my relative Edgar Rayner moved as a small boy to the more hospitable climate and open space of Oakland. There, family legend says, he helped the slightly older Jack London with one of his paper routes – working for candy. To test the veracity of this tale I pulled *Jack London: An American Life* off the shelf and was quickly swept away by the author's style and telling of London's remarkable, but short life.

The author, Earle Labor, is the curator of the Jack London Museum in Shreveport, Louisiana and a Wilson Professor of American Literature

(continued on page 7)

## HOLIDAY HOURS

The close dates this holiday calendar year are **December 24, 25, and January 1**. We will be open on **December 31** from **9am to 3pm**. If you find that you need to return materials, the book-drop in the lobby is open on December 24 – visit [milibrary.org/about/hours](http://milibrary.org/about/hours) for complete information on building hours.



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# AUTHORS, LECTURES, & MORE

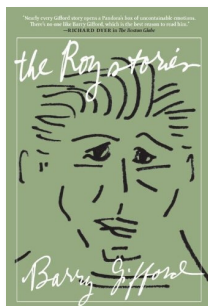
Attend these intimate and up close author programs and engage directly with local, national, and internationally known writers talking about their newly released books. - LAURA SHEPPARD, EVENTS DIRECTOR

## JANUARY 2014 PREVIEW

**Wednesday, January 15, 6:00 pm**

The Roy Stories (Seven Stories Press)

BARRY GIFFORD



In conversation with Peter Maravelis, Program Director, City Lights Books & Publishing

For forty years, *The Roy Stories* have been the one continuous unbroken line in the otherwise kaleidoscopic career of one of America's greatest living writers. Spanning time and space—the Southern and Midwestern United States from the 1940s through the 1980s—*The Roy Stories* chronicle the personal history of Gifford from Chicago to Miami in a Hemingway-style Nick Adams story. Emotional, exploratory, and brimming with photographic realism, these stories defy the parameters of memoir or autobiography.



Poet, novelist and master of the short story, Barry Gifford, is best known for *Wild at Heart*, *Sailor & Lula: The Complete Novels*, *Sad Stories of the Death of Kings*, and *Memories from a Sinking Ship: A Novel and Landscape with Traveler*. He has published over forty works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, which have been translated into twenty-eight languages. **Members Free; Public \$15**

**Wednesday, January 22, 6:00 pm** – Performance and photography from the book!

*The Day of the Locust* BY NATHANIEL WEST (Limited edition - Arion Press)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUCY GRAY

INTRODUCTION BY DAVID THOMSON

Photographer Lucy Gray has re-imagined this American literary classic about the shams of Hollywood and the motion-picture industry with her striking noir-esque photos for this fine art edition by Arion Press. Merging literature, theatre, and visual arts this evening of dramatic readings from *The Day of the Locust* features the six “actors” from her black and white “movie stills”.



Todd and Faye at  
the Movies

### CAST:

Lucy Gray - Narrator; Fred Martin - *Californian Who Came to Die*; Sam Hamm - *Harry Greener*; Sarah Cabrol - *Faye Greener*; Jan Halpern - *Homer Simpson*; Zachary Thomson - *Earle Shoop*

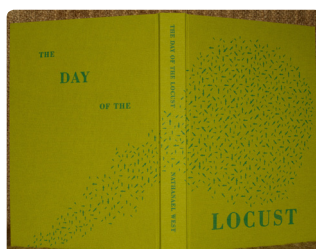
**Members \$10; Public \$20**



Californian Who  
Came to Die



Faye Greener



*The Day of the Locust*



Harry Meets  
Homer



Homer Jumps on  
the Boy

PHOTO CREDIT: LUCY GRAY

# CINEMALIT

CURATED & HOSTED BY MICHAEL FOX

**Fridays: Cafe 5:30 pm; Program 6:00 pm.**

**Members Free; Public suggested donation \$10**

## BARBARA STANWYCK: DARK STAR



### SEASON FINALE

**Friday, December 6**

***Remember the Night* (1940)**

DIRECTED BY MITCHELL LEISEN

Barbara Stanwyck, Fred

MacMurray

A kind district attorney offers a holiday refuge to a shoplifter in this comic and tenderhearted fable.



**Friday, January 17**

***Female* (1933)**

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL CURTIZ

Ruth Chatterton, George

Brent

The no-nonsense CEO of an automobile company gives orders and, ahem, uses her employees just like a man.

*Plus* Surprise Short

## JANUARY 2014 PREVIEW OVER THE TOP: PRE-CODE HOLLYWOOD



**Friday, January 10**

***Hell's Angels* (1930)**

DIRECTED BY HOWARD HUGHES

Ben Lyon, Jean Harlow

Breathtaking aerial combat sequences and Harlow's unabashed breakthrough distinguish this World War I spectacle.



**Friday, January 24**

***Skyscraper Souls* (1932)**

DIRECTED BY EDGAR SELWYN

Warren William,

Maureen O' Sullivan

A ruthless financier crushes anyone in his path to maintain control of a 100-story tower and preserve a luxurious lifestyle built on the exploitation of workers and women.

**Information & registration:** 415.393.0100 or [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events). All events are held in the 4th floor Meeting Room and require advance registration unless otherwise noted.

## FILMS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

HEATHER TERRELL, LIBRARY ASSISTANT

**D**o you feel all abuzz during the holiday season? If your brain feels too fried to get lost in a good book, Mechanics' Institute Library's collection includes DVDs to get you in the spirit and help you unwind. Here are a few of my favorite picks from our collection.



### ***How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966)**

The 1966 film version is a classic for good reason. Dr. Seuss's story of a surly fellow who learns that

Christmas is not about what we have, but what we share, reminds us to sit back and forget the frenetic pace of the holidays and enjoy one another.



### ***Desk Set* (1957)**

Corporate downsizing during the holiday season underpins the plot of this romantic comedy starring Katharine Hepburn (my

favorite Hepburn) and Spencer Tracy. Bonus: It's about a group of reference librarians – a must-see if you're a library geek like me.



### ***The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993)**

I can't resist a film that doubles as both a Halloween and a Christmas story. This is a love story, a masterful musical, and a

creepy charmer all in one.



### ***The City of Lost Children* (1995)**

If you liked *Amelie*, you will love *The City of Lost Children*. This is Jean-Pierre Jeunet's anti-hero Santa

archetype in a steampunk universe, before steampunk existed. It's the story of a man who cannot dream, so kidnaps children to steal theirs.



### ***Elf* (2003)**

*Elf* is silly. It makes me guffaw in a very unladylike manner every time I watch it.

# BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Our member-only Book Groups select, read, and discuss books of a particular type or genre. Members lead the discussions, new members are always welcome, and registration is not required (unless otherwise specified). Please note that Book Groups are not author events and the authors will not be present during the discussions.



**Monday, December 9, Noon**

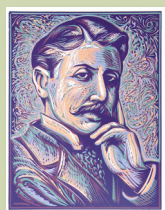
**Brown Bag Mystery Readers**

***Claire DeWitt and the City of the Dead***

BY SARA GRAN

PI Claire DeWitt has just arrived in post-Katrina New Orleans to investigate the disappearance of Vic Willing, a prosecutor known for winning convictions in a homicide-plagued city. Has an angry criminal enacted revenge on Vic? Or did he use the storm as a means to disappear?

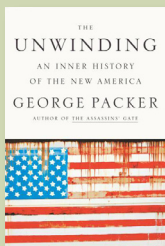
(courtesy of [www.ingramcontent.com](http://www.ingramcontent.com)) **Members Only. Walk-ins Welcome.**



**Wednesday, December 11 & 18, 5:30 pm**

**The Proust Society of America: San Francisco Chapter**

Under the leadership of Dr. Mark Calkins, Mechanics' Institute offers two bi-weekly discussion groups, on a semester basis. The Proust Group meets from 5:30 – 6:30 pm. From 6:45 – 8:00 pm, the World Literature Group discusses Proustian-inspired works. The new semester began on September 11th, and these groups are now closed to additional registrations. For more information, contact **Dr. Calkins** at [mark@tempsperdu.com](mailto:mark@tempsperdu.com) or **Diane Lai** at [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org). **Registration is closed for the semester.**



**Thursday, December 12, 4:00 – 5:30 pm**

**California Dreamers**

***The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America***

BY GEORGE PACKER

Silicon Valley used to be a place associated with exciting new developments in computer software, hardware, and the like. Interesting, fun, and hopefully useful. According to Packer and other critics, it is now effectively a global empire, still capable of producing good results, but increasingly vulnerable to careless or bad intentions, if not outright evil, because of the enormous wealth it generates, and the infinite connectivity it promises. (Perhaps the time has come to reverse E. M. Forster's dictum and say: "Only disconnect.") **Members Only. Registration Required.**



**Tuesday, December 17, Noon**

**Fiction You Wish You Had Read**

**Potpourri of Favorites**

Join us for our 5th annual Potpourri of Favorites. Bring in a book (fiction preferred) you have enjoyed, and convince the rest of the group that they will "wish they had read" it, too. You will enjoy hearing others talk about books they enjoyed and learn about some authors that may be new to you. You could find yourself departing with a list of good books for winter reading!

**Members Only. Walk-ins Welcome.**

**Information & registration:** Diane Lai at 415.393.0118 or [dlai@milibrary.org](mailto:dlai@milibrary.org). All books are available at the 2nd floor Circulation desk. All book discussions are held in the 4th floor Board Room. Register online at [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events), select the Book Group Meetings tab and choose the name of the Book Group.

# CLASSES AT THE LIBRARY



**Tuesday, December 3,  
12:00 - 1:00 pm**

**1st Tuesday TED Talk  
Topic: *The Power of  
Introverts***

**4th Floor Meeting Room**

In a culture where being social and outgoing are prized above all else, it can be difficult, even shameful, to be an introvert. But, as Susan Cain argues in this passionate talk, introverts bring extraordinary talents and abilities to the world, and should be encouraged and celebrated. We'll explore these topics and more in an informal discussion following the video. Bring your lunch and participate or just listen.

**Walk-ins Welcome.**

**Monday, December 16,  
2:30 - 3:30 pm**

**Twitter Tips & Tricks**



So, you've got your Twitter account all set up, and you've begun to follow other users and send out a few tweets. What's next? In this class we will look at sending direct messages, managing lists, mobile notifications and third-party applications. **Registration Required.**

**Members Only.**

**Thursday, December 19,  
10:00 - 11:00 am**

**Investment Information on  
the Web**



Attendees will learn how to access free investment information focused on publicly traded companies and mutual funds, and industry surveys, covering company profiles, corporate developments, earnings prospects, stock rating services and screeners, trading statistics and financial reports. Websites that we explore include Yahoo! Finance, MSN Money, MarketWatch, Google Finance, Bloomberg.com, and Morningstar. **Registration Required.**

**Members Only.**

**Information and registration:** 415.393.0102 or [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events). Classes are open to Mechanics' Institute members and guests, and are free. All classes are held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor class rooms and require advance registration unless otherwise noted.

## AUTHORS' CARNIVAL



**Picturing the News: A Look at the *San Francisco Examiner*  
Photographic Negative Collection**

**Monday, December 2, 4:00 pm**

**4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

Seven years ago the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley received a gift from the Fang Family of the *San Francisco Examiner* photographic archive, a rich collection of photographs documenting twentieth century San Francisco and more. Pictorial Processing Archivist Lori Hines will present a slideshow and talk on trends in journalism, culture, and history she observed while sorting, re-housing, and describing the collection of 3.6 million negatives from ca. 1930-2000. Images include San Francisco landmarks, World War II home front, celebrities, bohemian life, disasters and vice. Please note: Some images shown might be considered offensive.

**Members Free; Public \$15**



**Writers' Group Mixer**

**Thursday, January 9, 6:00 pm**

**4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

Are you interested in joining a writers' group or connecting with other MI writers? Come to this networking hour and learn about the writers' groups that are currently looking for new members and meet other writers who are interested in forming a group. **Members Only; Free**

**Finding a Beta Reader**

**Tuesday, January 21, 4:00 pm**

**4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

Have you written a manuscript? Do you need someone to read it over? Are you interested in helping authors with their raw material? Join us at this informal discussion and networking opportunity. Freelance editor David Colin Carr will discuss the merits of having people read your manuscript before you submit it to a publisher, tell you what to look for in potential readers, what the reader should expect from the writer, and how to manage and get the most out of the relationship. **Members Only; Free**



**Information and registration:** [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events), or Taryn Edwards at 415.393.0103, or [tedwards@milibrary.org](mailto:tedwards@milibrary.org).

# Chess

## News

INTERNATIONAL MASTER JOHN DONALDSON,  
DIRECTOR OF THE CHESS ROOM

**T**he Mechanics' Institute entry in the U.S. Chess League has won its division this season and qualified for the playoffs where it will meet arch-rival Los Angeles in the first round. The Mechanics' were led in the regular season by thirteen-year-old Siddarth Bannik who scored a perfect 4 for 4 on board 4 and 17-year-old Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky who finished with five wins and a loss playing board 2.

The U.S. Chess League is played over the Internet with each team having four players competing individually with their scores added together. There are 16 teams in the league which has operated since 2005.

The Mechanics' will be seeking to repeat its previous triumph in 2006.

### Mechanics' 2006 U.S. Chess League Champions



Left to Right: IM David Pruess, IM Vinay Bhat, NM Sam Shankland,  
Daniel Naroditsky, NM Mark Pinto,  
IM Dmitry Zilberstein, Former World Champion GM Boris Spassky,  
IM Josh Friedel, IM Vince McCambridge  
Mechanics' Institute Chess Club

## Chess for Women

**Sundays, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**  
**11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

TAUGHT BY EWELINA KRUBNIK

FUNDED BY A GIFT IN MEMORY OF R. MARTIN  
WISKEMANN

## Tournaments

**Saturday, December 7**  
**10:00 am – 8:00 pm**

13th Annual Guthrie McClain Memorial G/45

**Saturday, December 14**  
**10:00 am – 4:00 pm**

Children's Quad

## Tuesday Night Events

**December 3, 10, 17**  
**5:15 pm – 6:15 pm**

LECTURE BY JOHN DONALDSON

**6:30 pm – 10:30 pm**  
Fall Tuesday Night Marathon

## Wednesday Night Blitz

**December 4, 11, 18**  
**6:30 pm – 8:50 pm**

DIRECTED BY JULES JELINEK

## Saturday Morning Chess Class for Kids

**December 7, 14, 21, 28**  
**10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

TAUGHT BY INTERNATIONAL MASTER ELLIOTT  
WINSLOW

**Information & reservations: 415.393.0110 or [chessclub.org](http://chessclub.org).**

## Jack London (continued from page 1)

at Centenary College of Louisiana. Drawing upon London's diaries, those of his "Mate Woman" Charmian, and interviews with friends, lovers, and family, Labor deftly sorts through the myths and painful truths of London's meteoric life with an easy to read (almost novelistic at times) approach.

As a child, London was dreadfully poor and obliged to work numerous odd jobs to make money for his family including stints as paper boy, cannery employee, Klondike gold prospector and oyster pirate. I was shocked to read how young he was during all these daring adventures – still in his teens for the most part. While my great grandfather was working safely as a dry goods salesman, London was fearlessly jumping trains, fighting hobos, and drinking his pals under the table, all while writing, writing, writing.



Labor pays a great deal of attention to London's reading and writing habits – providing useful tips to the aspiring author though few can hope to match London's prodigious output. A life-long voracious reader, word collector, and disciplined writer, London churned out 1000 words a day, even when under extreme physical duress such as the time he contracted an exotic illness that caused his hands to swell to twice their normal size.

For London, reading was his life-line and his way out of the depressing circumstances of his youth. When he discovered the glories of the Oakland

Public Library he recalled that he "read mornings, afternoons, and nights. I read in bed, I read at the table, I read as I walked to and from school, and I read at recess while the other boys were playing." Years later, in a letter to Ina Coolbrith, librarian at the Oakland Public Library, California's first poet laureate, and later librarian of the Mercantile Association (with whom the Mechanics' Institute merged in 1906) he wrote, "I was an eager, thirsty, hungry little kid – and one day, at the library, I drew out a volume on Pizarro of Peru....you praised me for reading books of that nature. Proud! If you only knew how proud your words made me...You were a goddess to me."

Prior to reading this book I had assumed, through my childhood readings of London's "dog books" (*Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*) and having grown up around his old stomping grounds (what Oaklander doesn't adore London's Klondike shack outside of the First and Last Chance saloon) that London was merely "a rough, savage fellow...who likes prizefights and brutalities, [and] who has a clever turn of the pen." I was amazed to find that though indeed a man's man, London had a tender heart and an active, often mercurial mind. Those qualities, paired with his dreamy blue eyes and taste for adventure made him indeed swoon-worthy both physically and literarily.

This biography was a labor of love for the author as he spent over forty years amassing his research. I would say he has done a masterful job at resurrecting the amazing character of Jack London, bringing to life the turbulent times in which he lived and focusing attention on the breadth of London's work. London wrote of adventure, love, nobility, and "big living" and thus deserves his place in the pantheon of California writers. I, after reading this book, certainly will read more of him.

Jack London, at least for a time, haunted the Library of the Mechanics' Institute though Librarian Mary O. Carmody claimed "he was inclined to be a bit careless about returning books". Despite that questionable borrowing record, we are proud to have an impressive collection of materials about and by Jack London. Try an author search in our catalog to see what we have or go straight to the "L's" in the 2nd floor Fiction section.

## Members' Meeting

**Thursday, December 5**

**5:30 pm Reception and Refreshments; 6:00 pm Meeting**

**4TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM**

**Free to Members & Guests**

### Agenda

#### General News of the Institute

Join us for delicious refreshments and camaraderie as we welcome our new Library Director Deb Hunt and hear from the staff on what's new and coming up at the Mechanics' Institute. Bring your comments and questions.

#### Special Vote to Amend Articles of Incorporation

When we filed our Articles of Incorporation with the State of California back in 1905, it stated that the Board of Trustees shall consist of 14 members. The Board would like to have the flexibility to increase the number of its members.

**We therefore will ask you to vote on the following resolution at the Members' Meeting on December 5, 2013:**

Be it resolved that the portion of Paragraph 1 of the 5th Article of the Articles of Incorporation of Mechanics' Institute that presently reads "5th. That the number of its Trustees shall be fourteen" shall be amended to read: "5th. That the number of its Trustees shall be fixed by, or in the manner provided in, the Bylaws."

57 Post Street, San Francisco,  
CA 94104

[www.milibrary.org](http://www.milibrary.org)

Important Numbers

Circulation: 415.393.0101

Reference: 415.393.0102

Reservation hotline:

415.393.0100

E-mail: [reference@milibrary.org](mailto:reference@milibrary.org)

Library Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 9 pm

Friday: 9 am - 6 pm

Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm

Sunday: 1 pm - 5 pm

Sarah Cruz, Editor



## HOLIDAY BOOK & POSTER SALE

Wednesday, December 4

11:00 am - 4:00 pm

4th Floor Meeting Room

*Holiday shoppers*—come and select the perfect gifts for friends, family, colleagues or significant others! A delightful and diverse selection of hard-covers, paperbacks, book art, and posters will be available for purchase.

The café will be open for refreshments. Free to all.

*Your purchases benefit the Library and the Events Department.*

# ANNUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING

Thursday, December 12, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

2nd Floor Library

Join members and friends for some holiday cheer and lively conversation while relaxing to musical interludes. Enjoy gourmet cheeses and hors d'oeuvres, delectable desserts and tempting libations!

**Admission \$10 – Open to Members & Guests**

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Call 415.393.0100 or online [milibrary.org/events](http://milibrary.org/events)

